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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JANUARY 14, 2009

Summary: All newspapers on Wednesday ran as lead story Prime Minister Gilani's statement before the National Assembly that "India had not provided any evidence, just information" about the Mumbai terror attacks. Also front-paged were reports that British Foreign Secretary Miliband "emphatically disagreed with India's accusations that Pakistan's state institutions were somehow complicit in the Mumbai carnage." In a front page dispatch from Washington, English daily, "Dawn," quoted part of Secretary-designate Clinton's statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which indicated that "fighting terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan would be the highest priority of Obama Administration." Most newspapers also quoted former President Musharraf telling an audience in Chicago that "Red Mosque operation was a mistake of his long tenure." Ambassador Patterson's meeting with Defense Minister Mukhtar in which "Pakistan pressed U.S. for early provision of F-16s" also figured prominently.

Most major dailies ran editorials on growing tension between India and Pakistan. Commenting on the deteriorating Pakistan-India relations the leading Urdu daily, "Jang," wrote: "Pakistan should now have no difficulty in understanding the condemnable aggressive Indian designs against it after Indian rejection of all Pakistani offers of cooperation, threats of war and Indian attempts to isolate Pakistan in the international community." The English daily, "The Nation," pointed out that "since India does not acknowledge Pakistan's right to exist, in addition to its general hegemonic designs on the whole region, including Pakistan, 'those relations will never be trouble-free.'" Another national English daily, "The News," ran two editorials; one on the last press conference by President Bush and the other on imposed U.S. sanction against 13 individuals and three firms for nuclear proliferation. End Summary.

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News Stories  
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"Indian Provided Information, Not Evidence: Gilani" "Dawn" (01/14)

"Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani said on Tuesday the government was carefully examining the 'information' about the Mumbai terror attacks received last week and was prepared to cooperate with India to uncover facts. In a policy statement made in the National Assembly, he said that Pakistan would share with India results of its own investigation in due course of time. He said India had not provided any evidence, just information. 'All that has been received from India is some information. I say information because these are not evidence.'"

"Pakistan State Not Involved: Miliband" "Dawn" (01/14)

"British Foreign Secretary David Miliband assured India on Tuesday that President Asif Ali Zardari was sincere in his resolve to fight terrorism and encouraged New Delhi's restraint with Islamabad as a

mature way to deal with the fallout of the Mumbai terror attacks....

He emphatically disagreed with India's accusations that Pakistan's state institutions were somehow complicit in the Mumbai carnage. 'I have said publicly that I do not believe that the attacks were directed by the Pakistani state. And I think it is important to restate that,' he told a questioner."

"Miliband In Tune With Pak Government - Mumbai Attacks" "The News" (01/14)

"Britain's Foreign Minister David Miliband said on Tuesday he believed the Pakistani state did not direct the Mumbai attacks, but urged Islamabad to fulfill its promise to root out the militant groups, he told a news conference with Indian External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee after holding talks at the Hyderabad House."

"Pakistan, Afghanistan Will Be Obama's Priority: Hillary" "Dawn" (01/14)

"U.S. Secretary of State-designate Hillary Rodham Clinton told her confirmation hearing on Tuesday that fighting terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan would be the highest priority of the Obama administration. "It is imperative that we work with our friends in both Pakistan and Afghanistan" to defeat terrorists in that region, she told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee."

"Lal Masjid Operation Was A Mistake, Admits Musharraf" "The News" (091/14)

"Former President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday admitted that Lal Masjid operation was a mistake he committed during his long tenure, according to a private TV. According to a private TV, the former President attended a reception in Chicago under the auspices of his brother Naveed Musharraf."

"Pakistan Presses U.S. For Early Provision Of F-16s" "Daily Times" (01/14)

"Defence Minister Ahmad Mukhtar on Tuesday urged the United States to help Pakistan meet its security requirements including the provision of F-16 aircraft. He was talking to United States Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson who called on him to discuss matters of bilateral interest. A statement by the Defence Ministry said the two officials exchanged views over the current bilateral defence cooperation. 'The Minister informed the U.S. envoy about the defence requirements of Pakistan particularly the provision of F-16s aircraft,' the statement said. The U.S. Ambassador emphasized the need to further strengthen bilateral defence ties for mutual benefit."

"Zardari Urges India To Return To Dialogue" "Daily Times" (01/14)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has said that the resolution of all outstanding issues between Pakistan and India is vital for durable peace in the region, a private TV channel reported on Tuesday. According to the channel, President Zardari called for resumption of the composite dialogue process, which had broken off after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November last year."

"Stop Blame Game, Zardari Tells India" "The News" (01/14)

"Reaffirming his firm stance to wipe off the menace of terrorism, President Asif Ali Zardari told India in clear terms to stop blaming Pakistan for Mumbai mayhem urging it to expose the real culprits behind it."

"Mumbai Terror Attacks Witness Goes Missing" "The News" (01/14)

"The investigations into the Mumbai terror attacks have suffered a setback after a key eyewitness became untraceable. The Mumbai Police said on Tuesday that Anita Uddaiya, the woman who had identified the bodies of nine killed Mumbai terrorists, had been missing since January 11."

"India Urges World Not To Sell Arms To Pakistan" "Pakistan Observer" (01/14)

"In the wake of Pakistan's careless attitude after the Mumbai attack terrorist was proved to be a Pakistan national, India has asked the world not to sell arms to Pakistan."

"Saudi Intelligence Chief Brings King's Message; Pakistani Leaders Urged To Unite" "Dawn" (01/14)

"Saudi Intelligence Chief Prince Muqrin Bin Abdul Aziz spent a busy day in Islamabad on Tuesday, urging Pakistan's political elite to unite and play their role for de-escalating tension with India."

"Pak Torn Over How To Handle Taliban: Experts" "The Nation" (01/14)

"After years allowing Taliban militants to operate in the rugged tribal areas bordering Afghanistan, Pakistan is now torn over how to respond to U.S. calls for decisive action against extremists. Islamabad is under intense pressure from Washington, other western nations and Kabul to eliminate Taliban and Al-Qaeda havens in the tribal belt, from where fighters are said to stage attacks on foreign forces in Afghanistan. But experts say Pakistan's desire to please the United States, a vital political and military ally, has run up against its own strategic interests in the region and its loyalty to Pashtuns, the predominant ethnicity among the Taliban."

"COAS-Foreigners Contacts 'Not Against Protocol'" "The Nation" (01/14)

"No one should object to the meetings of military leadership with the visiting foreign dignitaries, whether civilian or military, as Pakistan is passing through the 'unusual' circumstances in the backdrop of global war on terrorism, security analysts said on Tuesday."

"Foreign Powers Dictating Government, Says Senator" "The News" (01/14)

"Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior, Talha Mahmood, on Tuesday said that the government was taking dictates from the foreign powers for promoting their agenda in Pakistan and had sidelined the Parliament's resolution that asked for a halt to the operations in the tribal and settled areas besides his Committee's recommendations."

"JI Threatens Long March; Tribal Area Operation" "Dawn" (01/14)

"The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has threatened to launch a long march that will culminate at the presidency and the army headquarters in the federal capital if the ongoing operation in tribal areas is not stopped forthwith.... He warned that participants in the long march would lay a siege to the presidency and the GHQ and would end their protest only after the operation came to an end."

"Protesters Stop NATO Supplies Through Chaman" "Dawn" (01/14)

"Western military supplies passing through Pakistan to Afghanistan faced more disruption on Tuesday after protesters blocked one route and militants launched the first attack in two weeks on another.... The supply route through the border town of Chaman in Balochistan has been largely free of attacks, at least on the Pakistani side. But Pashtun tribesmen, protesting against security forces searches for militants, have been blocking the road to the border since Saturday."

"Israel, Hamas Locked In Street Battle" "The News" (09/14)

"Israeli troops and Hamas fighters traded fierce gunfire on the streets of Gaza City on Tuesday as Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas accused the Jewish state of trying to 'wipe out' his people.... The overall death toll from the conflict on the Palestinian side has risen to at least 940, including 280 Palestinian children. A further 4,350 people have been wounded, according to the Palestinian emergency services."

"Security Council Backs Ban's Gaza Initiative" "Dawn" (01/14)

"UN Chief Ban Ki-moon got strong support from the Security Council on Tuesday as he briefed envoys on his upcoming Middle East tour to

step up diplomatic efforts toward a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip."

"Red Cross Chief Appeals For Gaza Medics' Protection" "Dawn"  
(01/14)

"International Committee of the Red Cross chief Jakob Kellenberger on Tuesday called for medical workers in Gaza to be protected as he visited the battered territory in the midst of Israeli attacks."

"Formal Notification About Durrani's Removal Yet To Be Issued" "The News" (01/14)

"No formal notification about removal of Maj. Gen. (Retd) Mehmud Ali Durrani as National Security Adviser has so far been issued even after the passage of one week of his sacking, a Cabinet Division official told 'The News' on condition of anonymity."

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Editorials/Op-eds  
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"Indian Tactics Must Be Exposed," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (01/14)

"Pakistan should now have no difficulty in understanding the condemnable aggressive Indian designs against it after Indian rejection of all Pakistani offers of cooperation, threats of war and Indian attempts to isolate Pakistan in the international community.... Indian rulers right from the beginning had never spared an occasion to harm Pakistan and its national interests. India initiated a plan to devastate Pakistani agricultural economy by blocking waters of the rivers Chenab, and Jhelum originated from the Himalayan mountains. Following threats of dire consequences, and political pressures in the wake of Mumbai carnage, India has now changed its strategy and expressed its intent to paralyze Pakistan financially by severing bilateral trade and commerce ties. Pakistan must make its diplomatic corps active to expose the Indian designs to counter its worldwide drive to isolate us in the world."

"Blowing Hot And Cold," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (01/14)

"As Mr. Chidambaram described, those ties are merely meant by India to enable India to turn them on or off according to the state of relations between the two neighbors. Since India does not acknowledge Pakistan's right to exist, in addition to its general hegemonic designs on the whole region, including Pakistan, those relations will never be trouble-free.... It seems that India has decided that whenever there is international pressure, it will play around with people-to-people contacts, and thus allow the visitors to claim a diplomatic achievement."

"The Nuclear Network," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"The statement by the U.S. State Department that it has imposed sanctions against 13 individuals and three firms linked to the A Q Khan network has refocused attention on the issue of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.... According to media scenarios, a prime fear is that terrorist strategy may pivot around having Pakistan move its nuclear weapons to frontline positions, where they would be more vulnerable to capture. There is even conjecture that the entire Mumbai action was based on the hope of triggering a Pak-India confrontation. Some, perhaps even all, of this may be rather far-fetched. But there can be no doubt about a nexus between intelligence agencies and extremists.... Within the country many in the know comment openly about the fact that elements in powerful positions still believe support for the Taliban is central to self-interest. At the same time we insist that eradicating extremism is a prime aim. Reports of raids on key centers of extremism go out to Washington at key moments. Islamabad needs to clear its own mind, dust away the cobwebs that still lurk and keep in view the need to re-build trust and faith."

"India's New Threat," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"The current tensions and the diplomatic deadlock they have brought

about have gone on far too long. Islamabad and New Delhi, possibly with a little help from friends such as China and the U.K., need to find a way to break free. India must accept the possibility of a role in the Mumbai attacks by groups based on its own soil. Pakistan must look into the possibility of links to forces based within its borders. The situation has not been handled with any great skill in either capital. A way needs to be found to move on."

"Banning Indian Channels," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"The Indian Home Minister, P. Chidambaram, may have threatened to isolate us globally by snapping business, transport and tourism links with Pakistan. The good cop, bad cop game being played out by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on the conciliatory end of things and the likes of Chidambaram and External Affairs Minister Pranab Mukherjee on the other may also be in poor taste. Be that as it may, there is no reason for Pakistan to react in like manner for it can serve no constructive purpose.... Media-related, cultural, sporting and other people-to-people contacts must not be sacrificed at the altar of nationalistic fervor. True, the blame for the rapid deterioration of relations on the apolitical level rests largely with India. But the people of the subcontinent have everything to lose if they stop speaking to and listening to each other and travelling across the border. Only with regular people-to-people contact will Pakistanis and Indians come to appreciate once again that they have much in common, including the shared enemy that is terrorism."

"Chidambaram's Futile Threatening Statement," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (01/14)

"India's post-Mumbai strategy has been flawed to the extent that it has progressively lost international support for its maximalist demands. Pakistan is not the world's favorite in the current situation but India's repeated reference to war in its 'all options open' statements has cautioned the extra-regional powers against backing everything that India says. But such is the pressure of domestic politics months before the next general election that Indian leaders continue to flip-flop between 'all options open' and 'war no option.' Mr. Chidambaram's innovation of snapping relations is another effort to keep the pressure on Pakistan by indirectly threatening war. On the other hand, every time India does this, Pakistan's otherwise weak position improves vis-à-vis world opinion."

"Thank You India: Indian Threat Of Cutting Trade And Tourism Links," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (01/14)

"Indian Home Minister Chidambaram has said Pakistan is not cooperating in the investigation of Mumbai attacks and as a response India is considering severing trade, communication, diplomatic and tourism links with Pakistan.... If India severs these ties with Pakistan on the pretext of Mumbai attacks then the people of Pakistan would welcome that.... We had been saying that Pakistan should not maintain any kind of relationship with India unless Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions.... India has hurled a threat only and Pakistan should prove its honor by initiating action in this respect."

"Pakistan Needs Clear Stand On India," editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (01/14)

"India has issued a fresh threat to Pakistan of completely cutting off diplomatic relations if our country does not cooperate with India in investigation. India has been very clearly working towards declaring Pakistan a terrorist country, isolating it in international community, Pakistani government must understand this and prepare a counter strategy which should focus on high lighting sufferings of minorities in India, telling world of terrorist and extremists Hindu groups in India, there is chain of events that has taken place in India, Pakistan need to bring all these on international arena, which would be enough evidence to prove Indian

extremist groups as terrorists because this region would see peace only when world understands India's reality."

"Swat's Burning Questions," an op-ed by Nasim Zehra in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"Public conjectures are endless and varied: the army has no will to go after the militants, the ANP is following the American line, the army and the militants are one, the army is trapping the ANP, the Police, the FC and the local citizens are being killed while the army is safe, if the army leaves the locals can make compromises with the militants and be in peace, the army is anyway scared of the militants; is it 'scared' because it fears casualties, it does not understand the nature of the threat, etc. Clearly the Pakistanis of Swat have zero faith in the institutions of their own country. Can we blame them?"

"National Assembly's Resolution Against Israeli Aggression," an editorial in the Peshawar-based Urdu-language daily "Mashriq" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"The U.S. is engaged in supplying arms to Israel instead of exerting pressure to discontinue strikes against Palestinians in Gaza Strip. All the Muslim states must make it clear to the United States that if it does not stop backing Israel, the Muslim world will be left with no other choice except to devise a strategy in consultation with other big powers to cope with this state of affairs."

"Experiment Of Lethal American Weapons On Palestinians," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/14)

"Two Norwegian doctors who work for a relief group in Gaza have disclosed that Israel is using lethal weapons DIMES in Gaza Strip. Moreover the Human Rights Watch has also confirmed that Israel is pounding Gaza with the deadly Phosphorus bombs. In fact the besieged population of Gaza Strip is facing a brutal aggression and worst genocide by the Zionist beasts."

"Israeli Barbarism," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (01/14)

"Israel and the U.S. are failing to realize that the brutalities being committed in Gaza, massacre of innocent children are igniting the deep seated hatred which will give birth to an endless crop of suicide bombers, who will never let the region rest in peace until justice is done. There was hope that with the installation of the new government of Obama there would be some change in the attitude of White House towards Palestinians, but this hope has not been realized. The U.S. lukewarm attitude over the Palestinians' killing under the new Obama administration has disappointed right thinking people all over the world. This has been the first test for the new U.S. administration. If it fails like its predecessor, the Middle East may be embroiled in an uncontrollable conflagration leading to unforeseen consequences."

"Muslim World's Unity Is Imperative To Stop Israeli Aggression," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (01/14)

"The entire world is shaken when 200 people are killed in a terrorist act in Mumbai, yet the world only makes statements when Israel martyrs scores of Palestinians every day. This attitude by the U.S. and Israel naturally creates an impression among Muslims that the U.S. is consciously targeting Muslims. American and Israeli acts are creating hatred among the Muslim nations and the time has come for the [Muslim] governments to change their attitude also. The Muslim world needs to forge unity in its ranks to make its voice effective. It will not be possible to stop Israel if the Muslim world remains divided."

"Deliberate Acquiescence To Israeli Terrorism," an op-ed by Shireen M. Mazari in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"Muslim governments continue to maintain a deadly silence - beyond a few whimperings and mutterings - even as their people rise in protest. Is it any wonder the Muslim street is becoming increasingly radicalized? They said the League of Nations was too

discredited to provide an international response to Hitler, but the UNSC is now armed with powerful anti-terror resolutions and mechanisms for their implementation. So why is the international community mute on Israel? Or are these resolutions only for Muslims while the rest of the world is free to commit all manner of acts of terror unhindered?"

"The Last Hurrah," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (01/14)

"The last time Bush had faced the press was on December 14 in Baghdad and he demonstrated that he still had speedy reactions and good peripheral vision when he got 'showed shoes' by one of the reporters in attendance. The shoes missed, the reporter was arrested, and now we are days from The Last Hurrah and the handing one of the baton. Few in this part of the world are going to mourn his passing and George Bush may well have done more to proliferate global terrorism than any of his predecessors. Enjoy your retirement, Mr. President ... and don't call us, we'll call you. Maybe."

"Gilani's Acknowledgment Of U.S. Interference In Pakistani Politics," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (01/14)

"Prime Minister Gilani has plainly admitted the U.S. interference in Pakistan's politics. If truth be told, he himself negated the immense struggle of his party PPP, and the people of Pakistan against the Musharraf regime. It is also regrettable that our political leadership does not dare to confer awards to these 'intruders.' No one is going to believe that a head of the government can issue such an irresponsible statement."

"Half Truth," an op-ed by Irfan Siddiqui in the leading mass-circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (01/14)

"There might be certainly some very strange reasons, or else a sane person, a seasoned politician, or a Prime Minister cannot dare to make such bizarre, shallow and reckless remarks that the U.S. Senator Joe Biden made Musharraf doff military uniform. In fact, the U.S., the homeland of Mr. Biden provide all-out support to Musharraf for whole eight and an half year. The U.S. made him (Musharraf) his operative in the war on terror, and Americans overlooked how did this operative play havoc with Pakistani nation, its constitution, its laws, its judiciary, and its democratic system. Prime Minister Gilani must inform the nation that did Senator Biden, who was the member of Senator and Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee during that period, ever made any statement to condemn dictatorship in Pakistan, criticized the

Musharraf regime, or asked the U.S. administration to ditch Musharraf, and support democratic forces in Pakistan. Did Mr. Biden ever denounce Musharraf's assault on judiciary in Pakistan?"

"Pakistan And U.S. Should Seize Opportunity," an op-ed by Abdul Sattar in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (01/14)

"Of course the opportunity has to be seized by Islamabad: it will require not only clear recognition of parallel interests but also identification of plans and policies for their efficient and effective promotion. Both countries share equal interest in closer cooperation in the fight against terrorism.... To revert to Pakistan-U.S. relations, constructive changes in the offing provide an opportunity for Islamabad to intensify security cooperation with the United States in order to eliminate Al-Qaeda presence on Pakistan territory, promote internal security against terrorism by stemming the tide of obscurantism and extremism that threatens the realization of the progressive and modernizing vision of our nation."

Patterson